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Contact: Matt Lambert/Jocelyn Rogers
(202) 225-2132

Istook Announces USDA Grants for OK Drought Relief

Washington, DC – Congressman Ernest Istook (R-Warr Acres) announced today that the USDA will allocate more than \$2.7 million to 32 Oklahoma counties to combat drought conditions to lessen the likelihood of further wildfires.

The USDA is making these funds available to Oklahoma through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), which provides emergency assistance to farmers and ranchers affected by natural disasters and carries out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) will provide money to producers in approved counties who need to seek alternative water sources for livestock and the emergency loan program will make low interest loan money available statewide so farmers and ranchers can restructure debt or purchase feed for livestock.

“Oklahoma has watched more than 400,000 acres burn to the ground because of this drought since the wildfires began in the early part of November,” said Rep. Istook. **“We are actively searching for every possible avenue of federal funding to help combat these fires. The ECP is designed to do just that.”**

ECP program participants receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices. To rehabilitate farmland, Oklahoma farmers may implement emergency conservation practices, such as removing debris, restoring fences/structures and providing water for livestock in drought situations.

For other drought related programs visit the USDA website at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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